

PET SAFETY IN HOT WEATHER

The City of Millville knows that summer heat is hard on all of us, and can be especially difficult for our family pets. Here is important information and tips for keeping your pet safe in the summer heat. Late spring and early summer are great times to enjoy the outdoors with your pets.

A few simple precautions will keep your animals healthy and happy throughout the warm weather.

- Your pet feels the heat just like you do. Consider getting exercise together in the early morning or late in the day when the sun is lower and the air is cooler.
- Be aware that the summer sun makes pavement and black top very hot which can burn your dog's paws. If you are walking on sidewalks, stay on the shady side of the street or let your dog walk on grass or dirt.
- Indoors or outside, always provide ample fresh, clean water for your pet. If you use a crate, provide water when your pet is confined. Some crates have places to put water. If not, a heavy bottomed bowl will work.
- If your pet spends time outside, make sure there is always a shady place to shelter from the sun. Some dogs dig into the ground so there is a cool depression for them, but this may damage your shrubs or landscaping in your yard. Providing a shady shelter may lessen this behavior. Giving your dog a 'digging pit' of soft earth and training it to dig only there may help. If your dog continues to exhibit destructive behavior in your yard, consult an experienced trainer or speak with your vet.
- Warm weather is the peak time for the mosquitos that carry heartworm and for fleas, ticks and other parasites. Speak with your vet about the best way to prevent these from infecting your pet. If your dog has not been taking heartworm preventive medicine all winter, your vet will order a blood test to make sure there is no infection before starting on heartworm prevention.
- If you are going out in the car and will be parking for a while, it's best to leave your pet home in hot weather. When the outside temperature is 85 degrees, inside a car, even with the windows open a bit, the temperature can reach 102 degrees within just 10 minutes and up to 120 degrees after half an hour. Even at 72 degrees, in under an hour, the interior of the car can reach 116 degrees. If you leave your animal in the car, in the shade, for a brief time, do not leave the windows open with enough space for someone to put in a hand or for your dog to put out his head. Protecting the territory of 'his car' could lead your dog to bite a hand that comes too close.
- A lot of dogs enjoy riding with their heads out the window, but this may not be safe. At speed, debris can hit the animal and cause injury. It is never safe for an unsecured dog to ride in the bed of a truck, no matter the speed. Seeing another animal may lure your dog into jumping out of the bed.
- You may think that shaving your dog or cat will help keep him cool in the summer. But vets tell us that an animal's fur provides insulation from the heat and protection from sunburn. You can trim long fur, but leave enough to provide that protection. Your vet or an experienced groomer can advise you on this.

Recommended websites:

http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2013/05/warm-weather-pet-tips-052013.html#.UqJCh_RDtvA

<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/hot-weather-tips>

Thanks for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Humane Society and the ASPCA for making this information available.